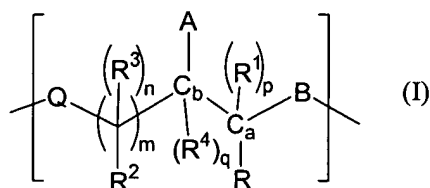
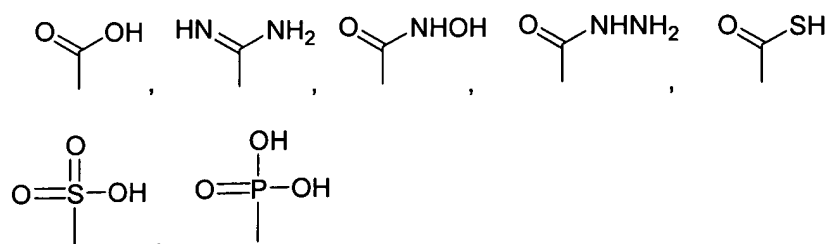


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

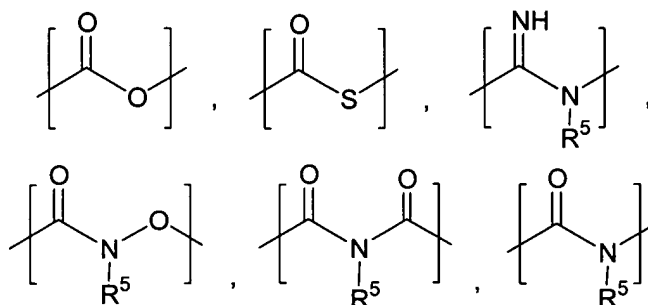
1. (Currently Amended) A polymer comprising a polymeric backbone comprising at least one unit having the structure (I),



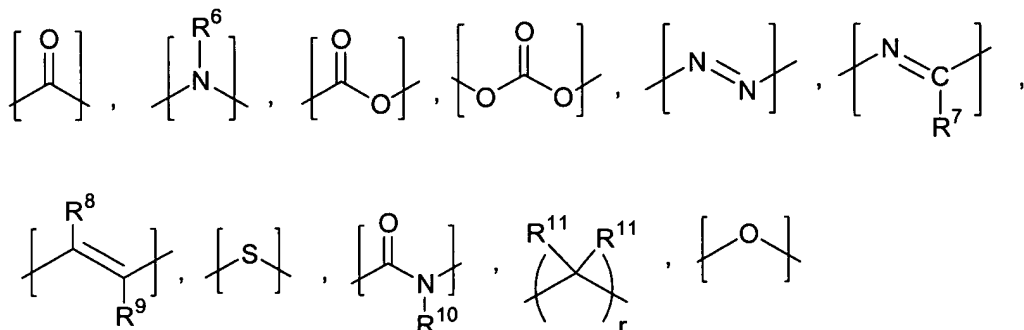
wherein each of R-R⁴ comprise groups a group selected from the group consisting of H, C₁-C₁₂ alkyl, C₆-C₁₈ aryl, C₇-C₁₈ aralkyl, C₆-C₁₈ cycloalkyl or any member of the said group consisting of C₁-C₁₂ alkyl, C₆-C₁₈ aryl, C₇-C₁₈ aralkyl, C₆-C₁₈ cycloalkyl-substituted, within the carbon chain or appended thereto, with one or more heteroatoms; R and R² or R and R⁴ or R and R¹ or R² and R³ may be joined so that with the carbon atom(s) to which they are attached they together form a saturated, partially unsaturated or unsaturated ring system respectively, may have a pendent group which may incorporate a linker unit, ~~(for example a peptide linkage or a unit having the structure (I))~~; A comprises a proton donating moiety selected from the group consisting of



B comprises a hydrolytically labile group and is selected from the group consisting of



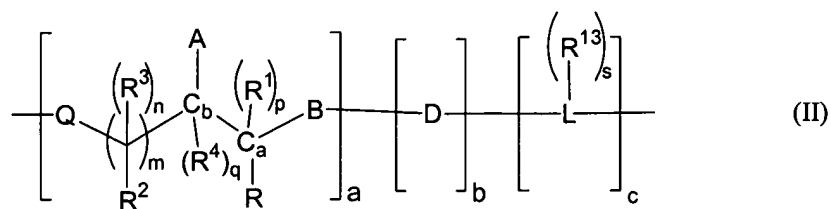
wherein each R^5 is individually selected from the group consisting of H, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_{12}$ alkyl, $\text{C}_6\text{-C}_{18}$ aryl, $\text{C}_7\text{-C}_{18}$ aralkyl, and $\text{C}_6\text{-C}_{18}$ cycloalkyl; wherein groups A and B are in a cis-configuration about bond $\text{C}_a\text{-C}_b$; m is an integer ~~of~~ in the range from 0 to 100, n, p and q are each ~~an integer of~~ 0 or 1; Q comprises 1 or more structures selected from the group consisting of



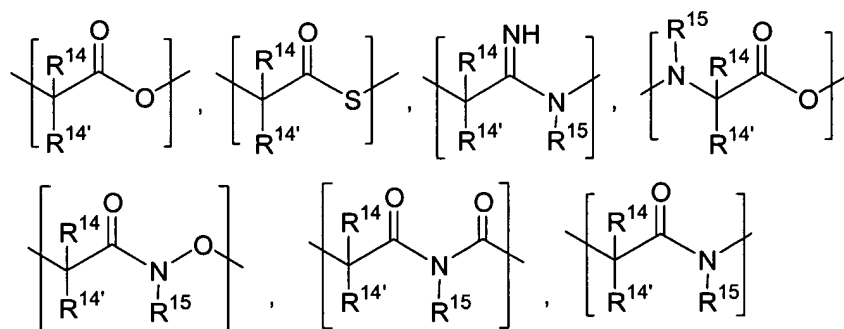
wherein $\text{R}^6\text{-R}^{11}$ are individually selected from the same group as defined for group R above and r is an integer between 1 and 5000, and wherein the other components of the polymeric backbone may be other groups having the structure (I), peptide units or degradable polymeric, oligomeric or monomeric units.

2. (Original) A polymer according to claim 1, wherein $\text{C}_a\text{-C}_b$ is a double bond and p and q are each 0.

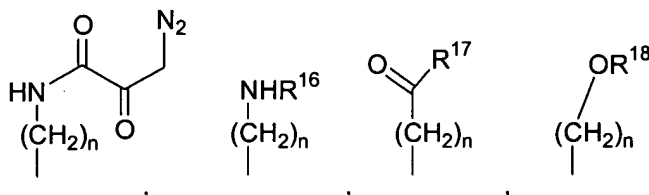
3. (Currently Amended) A polymer according to claim 1 wherein R, R² and R³ are selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, ethyl or propyl, ~~preferably hydrogen.~~
4. (Previously Presented) A polymer according to claim 1, wherein A is a carboxylic acid group.
5. (Previously Presented) A polymer according to claim 1, wherein B comprises an amide bond.
6. (Previously Presented) A polymer according to claim 1, wherein Q comprises a carbonyl functionality.
7. (Currently Amended) A polymer according to claim 1, wherein the polymeric backbone ~~additionally~~ comprises polymers selected from the group consisting of acrylic polymers, alkylene polymers, urethane polymers, amide polymers ~~(including polypeptides)~~, polysaccharides and ester polymers.
8. (Currently Amended) A polymer according to claim 1, wherein the polymeric backbone comprises ~~polymers~~ a polymer selected from the group consisting of derivatised polyethyleneglycol and copolymers of hydroxyalkyl(meth)acrylamide, ~~most preferably amine derivatised polyethyleneglycol or hydroxypropylmethacrylamide-methacrylic acid copolymers or amide or ester derivatives thereof.~~
9. (Currently Amended) A polymer according to claim 1, wherein the polymeric backbone comprises the structure (II)



wherein A, B, Q, R-R⁴, m, n, p and q are as defined in claim 1; L is a polymeric, oligomeric or copolymeric bridging group which comprises polymer selected from the group consisting of acrylic polymers, alkylene polymers, urethane polymers, polyethylene glycols, polyamides, polysaccharides and polyesters; a is an integer in the range of 1 to 100000, b and c are integers in the range of 0 to 100000 and s is an integer in the range of 0 to 100; D comprises one or more structures individually selected from the group consisting of



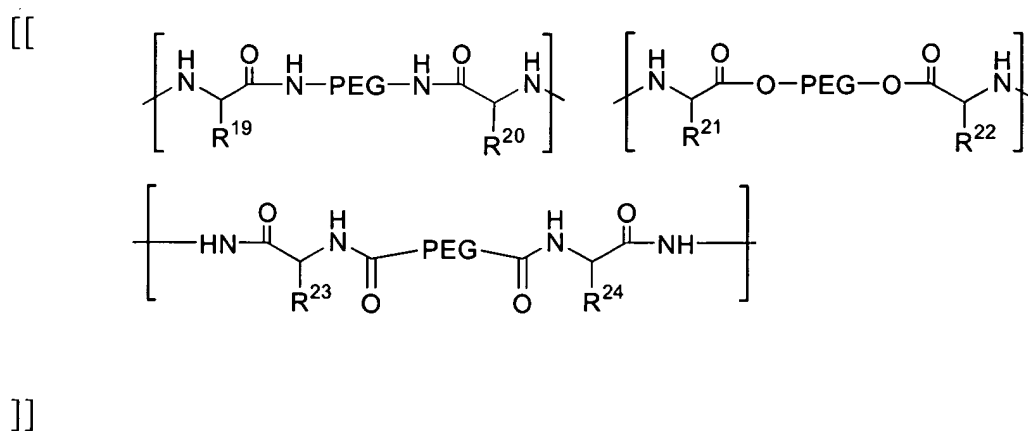
wherein R¹⁴ and R^{14'} comprise groups individually selected from the same groups as defined for R or may comprise a structure selected from the group consisting of



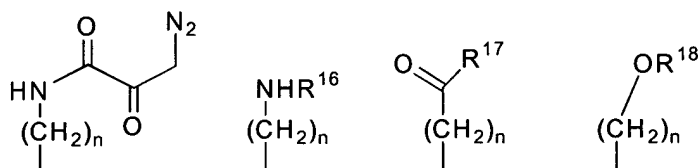
wherein n is an integer in the range of 0-100, R¹⁵ is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen and C₁-C₆ alkyl, R¹⁶ to R¹⁸ are individually selected from the

group consisting of H, C₁-C₁₂ alkyl, C₁-C₁₂ alkenyl, C₆-C₁₈ aryl, C₇-C₁₈ aralkyl, C₅-C₁₈ cycloalkyl or ~~is selected from the any member of said group consisting of C₄-C₁₂ alkyl, C₄-C₁₂ alkenyl, C₆-C₁₈ aryl, C₇-C₁₈ aralkyl, C₆-C₁₈ cycloalkyl~~ substituted, within the carbon chain or appended thereto, with one or more heteroatoms ~~[[,]]~~ or a pendent group comprising a linker unit, ~~for example a peptide linkage or a unit having the structure (I) or a leaving group~~, R¹³ is selected from the group consisting of H, C₁-C₁₂ alkyl, C₁-C₁₂ alkenyl, C₆-C₁₈ aryl, C₇-C₁₈ aralkyl, C₅-C₁₈ cycloalkyl or is ~~selected from the any member of said group consisting of C₄-C₁₂ alkyl, C₄-C₁₂ alkenyl, C₆-C₁₈ aryl, C₇-C₁₈ aralkyl, C₆-C₁₈ cycloalkyl~~ substituted, within the carbon chain or appended thereto, with one or more heteroatoms, R¹³ optionally incorporating a linker unit, ~~for example a peptide linkage or a unit having the structure (I).~~

10. (Currently amended) A polymer according to claim 9, wherein L comprises amine derivatised polyethyleneglycol, ~~most preferably a structure selected from the group consisting of~~



~~wherein PEG is polyethyleneglycol, R^{19} - R^{24} optionally incorporates a pendent group comprising a cleavable linker unit, and may additionally comprise groups individually selected from the same groups as defined for R or may comprise a structure selected from the group consisting of [[~~



~~]]~~

~~wherein n and R^{16} to R^{18} and R^{16} to R^{18} are as defined in claim 9.~~

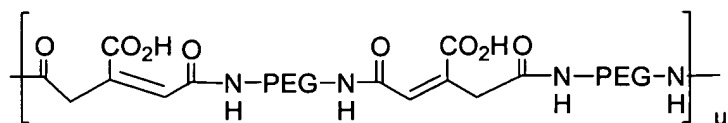
11. (Currently Amended) A polymer according to claim 9, wherein s is an integer ~~[[of]]~~ in the range from 1 to 10, preferably 1.

12. (Currently Amended) ~~[[a]]~~ A polymer according to claim ~~[[9]]~~ 29, wherein at least one of R^{14} to R^{24} incorporates a cleavable bond, ~~preferably a group (I) or one or more peptide bonds.~~

13. (Currently Amended) A polymer according to claim 9, wherein the polymer is conjugated to a bioactive agent, ~~preferably an anti-cancer agent, most preferably, doxorubicin, daunomycin or taxol.~~

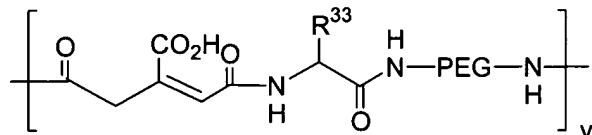
14. (Currently Amended) A polymer according to claim 9, wherein the number average molecular weight is in the range of 0.5kDa-400kDa.

15. (Currently Amended) A polymer according to claim 9, having the structure



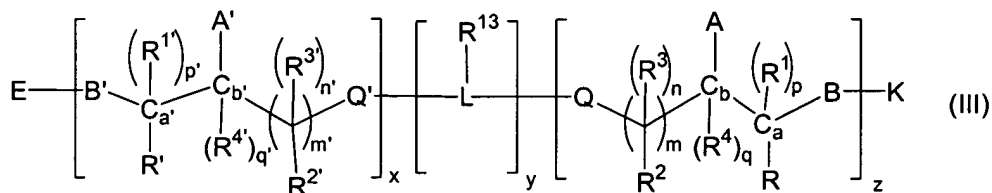
wherein PEG is a polyethylene glycol group, or derivative thereof, having a number average molecular weight in the range of 500 Da-100kDa and u is an integer in the range of 1-10000.

16. (Currently Amended) A polymer according to claim 1, having the structure



wherein PEG is a polyethylene glycol group having a number average molecular weight in the range of 500 Da-100kDa or derivative thereof, and u is an integer in the range of 1-10000.

17. (Currently Amended) A prepolymer comprising the structure

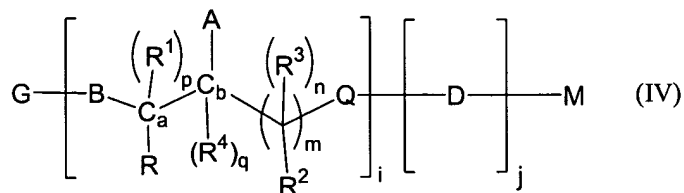


wherein A, B, Q, R-R³, m, n, p and q are as defined in claim 9; R¹³ and L are as defined in claim 9; A', B', Q', R^{1'}-R^{4'}, m', n', p', and q' are selected from the groups as defined for A, B, Q, R¹-R⁴, m, n, p and q respectively; E and K are selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, an activating group or a protecting group and may be the same or different; z is an integer [[of]] in the range from 1 to 100, y is an integer [[of]] in the range from 0 to 10 and x is an integer [[of]] in the range from 0 to 100.

18. (Original) A prepolymer according to claim 17, wherein z is 1, y is 1 and x is 1.

19. (Currently Amended) A prepolymer according to claim 17, wherein B and B' comprise a carboxyl group and E and K are selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, N-succinimidyl, pentachlorophenyl, pentafluorophenyl, paranitrophenyl, dinitrophenyl, N-phthalimido, N-norbornyl, cyanomethyl, pyridyl, trichlorotriazine, and 5-chloroquinoline, ~~preferably hydrogen or N-succinimidyl~~.

20. (Currently Amended) A prepolymer comprising the structure (IV)



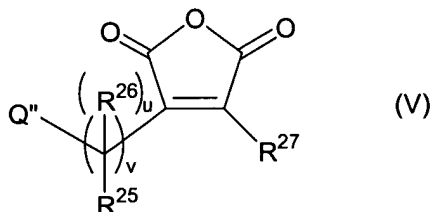
wherein A, B, Q, R-R⁴, m, n, p and q are as defined in claim 9; D is as defined in claim 9; G and M are selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, an activating

group or a protecting group, and i and j are integers ~~[[of]]~~ in the range from 1 to 10.

21. (Original) A prepolymer according to claim 20, wherein i is 1 and j is 1.

22. (Currently Amended) A prepolymer according to claim 20, wherein B and D comprise carboxylic acid groups and G and M are selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, N-succinimidyl, pentachlorophenyl, pentafluorophenyl, para-nitrophenyl, dinitrophenyl, N-phthalimido, N-norbornyl, cyanomethyl, pyridyl, trichlorotriazine, and 5-chloroquinoline, ~~preferably hydrogen or N-succinimidyl.~~

23. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a polymer, copolymer or prepolymer comprising reacting at least one compound having the structure (V)



wherein R^{25} , R^{26} and R^{27} are selected from the group as defined for R; Q'' is selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acid, primary or secondary amine and carbonyl; u is an integer ~~[[of]]~~ in the range from 0 or 1, v is an integer ~~[[of]]~~ in the range from 1 to 100, R^{27} and R^{25} may be attached to form part of a $C_3 - C_{12}$ ring system which may have more than one unsaturated bond and may be aromatic; with at least one compound selected from the group consisting of J and $R^{13}LNHR^{28}$,

wherein L and R¹³ groups are as defined above and R²⁸ is selected from the same group as defined for R and may be the same or different, J is a compound having at least one primary or secondary amine and a carboxylic acid group and a pendent group incorporating a cleavable bond.

24. (Currently amended) A method of selectively degrading a polymer comprising the steps of:

- a) introducing a polymer as comprising a structure (I) or (II) as defined in claim 9, to an environment having a pH of less than 6.5, and
- b) cleaving said polymer.

25. (Previously Presented) Amended) A method for releasing a bioactive agent comprising the steps of

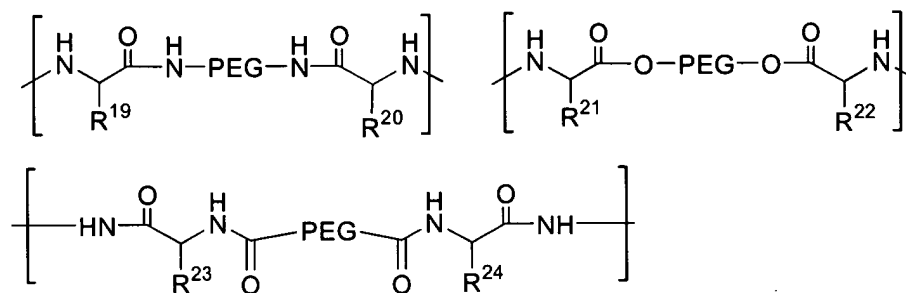
- a) introducing a conjugate comprising a structure (I) or (II) as defined in claim 9, and a bioactive agent to an environment having a pH of less than 6.5,
- c) cleaving the bioactive agent from the linker group by acid or enzymic hydrolysis,
- d) optionally additionally cleaving the polymer by acid or enzymic hydrolysis.

26. (Previously Presented) A composition comprising at least one polymer as defined in claim 1 and a carrier.

27. (New) A composition comprising at least one polymer as defined in claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

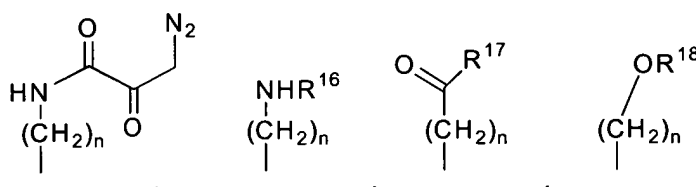
28. (Canceled).

29. (New) A polymer according to claim 10, wherein L comprises a structure selected from the group consisting of



wherein PEG

is polyethyleneglycol, R^{19} - R^{24} are individually selected from the same groups as defined for R or comprise a structure selected from the group consisting of



wherein n and R^{16} to R^{18} are as defined in claim 9, R^{19} - R^{24} optionally incorporating a pendent group comprising a cleavable linker unit.

30. (New) A polymer according to claim 1 wherein R , R^2 and R^3 are hydrogen.

31. (New) A polymer according to claim 13, wherein the polymer is conjugated to an anti cancer agent.

32. (New) A polymer according to claim 31, wherein the polymer is conjugated to doxorubicin, daunomycin or taxol.

33. (New) A prepolymer according to claim 19, wherein E and K are selected from the group consisting of hydrogen and N-succinimidyl.

34. (New) A prepolymer according to claim 22, wherein E and K are selected from the group consisting of hydrogen and N-succinimidyl.